

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-11

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05  
H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02  
SS-15 ICA-11 ACDA-12 IO-13 EB-08 NRC-05 OES-07  
SOE-02 DOE-15 CEQ-01 /150 W  
-----032688 241117Z /10

R 231305Z JUN 78  
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2396  
INFO AMCONSUL BOMBAY  
AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY DACCA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY KABUL  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMCONSUL MADRAS  
USLO PEKING  
CINCPAC

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E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: SOPN, PEPR, IN  
SUBJECT: INDIAN REACTION TO DESAI'S US VISIT

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY AND CONSULATE CONTACTS RATE PRIME MINISTER DESAI'S VISIT TO U.S. AN OVERALL SUCCESS, A VIEW WHICH REFLECTS THE VERY UPBEAT COVERAGE OF INDIAN JOURNALISTS. THE NUCLEAR ISSUE ASIDE, THEMES MOST OFTEN STRESSED ARE MORARJI'S EFFECTIVE CHAMPIONING OF INDIA'S POSITIONS AND THE WARMTH OF THE RECEPTION AND THE DEGREE OF ATTENTION AND DEFERENCE GIVEN HIM AT THE WHITE HOUSE AND IN THE U.S. IN GENERAL END SUMMARY.

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2. IN AN UNDERSTANDABLY NATIONALISTIC RESPONSE, INDIANS VARIOUSLY EXPRESS GREAT ADMIRATION, SATISFACTION AND GRATIFICATION FOR MORARJI'S STRONG AND ASSERTIVE PRESENTATION OF INDIA'S CASE, THEH PRAISE HIS FRANKNESS, HIS FORCEFULNESS AND HIS FIRMNESS WHILE AT THE SAME TIME CREDITING HIM WITH SUCCESSFULLY AVOIDING CONFRONTATION OR RAISING RANCOR AND FURTHER DEVELOPING HIS VERY CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH PRESIDENT CARTER. PARTICULARLY IN NEW

DELHI, OBSERVERS SEE AS MOST IMPORTANT DESAI'S EFFECTIVE MEETINGS WITH SENATE AND HOUSE COMMITTEEMEN, ALTHOUGH ONE OBSERVER NOTED THAT WHILE HE WAS SURE DESAI IMPRESSED THE LEGISLATORS, HE WAS NOT SURE THAT THE PRIME MINISTER HAD "CONVINCED" THEM.

3. ALTHOUGH THE FOCUS IN BOTH PRESS AND PRIVATE COMMENTS HAS BEEN UPON DESAI'S PERFORMANCE AND ENHANCEMENT OF INDIA'S IMAGE, THERE HAS ALSO BEEN APPRECIATION FOR THE WARMTH OF PRESIDENT AND MRS. CARTER'S RECEIPTION OF THE PRIME MINISTER AND OF THE PRESIDENT AND THE UNITED STATES FOR ACCEPTING DESAI'S CANDID APPROACH AS A BASIS FOR DEVELOPING FURTHER THE INDO-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP. DUE ATTENTION IS ALSO GIVEN TO THE VISITS AS FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THE GREAT WARMTH AND RAPPORT THAT THE PRIME MINISTER AND PRESIDENT HAVE ESTABLISHED.

4. ALL THE CONGENS REPORT THAT THE VISIT IS SEEN AS A POLITICAL PLUS FOR THE PRIME MINISTER. MADRAS REPORTS THAT THERE IS A NEW WARMTH AND PRIDE IN PEOPLE'S COMMENTS ABOUT DESAI AND HIS CONDUCT DURING THE VISIT. CALCUTTA REPORTS THAT BY MAKING INDIA LOOK STRONG AND IMPORTANT, DESAI PLEASED INDIANS AND STRENGTHENED HIMSELF AT HOME. BOMBAY REPORTS THAT DESAI SEEMS TO HAVE ENHANCED HIS OWN STATURE IN THE REGION. IN NEW DELHI, OBSERVERS, ALTHOUGH PLEASED WITH THE PM'S TRIP AND WITH HIS SUCCESSFUL FOREIGN POLICY IN GENERAL, DO NOT MAKE A POINT OF SEEING IT ADDING TO HIS DOMESTIC STATURE.

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5. ASIDE FROM OCCASIONAL REFERENCES TO STUDENT VISAS, THE ONLY ISSUE THAT ELICITS ANY COMMENT IS THE NUCLEAR ONE AND HERE PERCEPTIONS OF DESAI'S PERFORMANCE DIFFER CONSIDERABLY. AS CALCUTTA AND MADRAS REPORT, ONE VIEW IS THAT DESAI HAS "BROUGHT HOME THE URANIUM" BY BEING INSTRUMENTAL IN OBTAINING APPROVAL FOR THE PENDING TARAPUR SHIPMENT AND RAISING THE PROBABILITY OF FURTHER SUPPLY. DESAI IS PRAISED FOR HAVING DONE SO WITHOUT COMPROMISING INDIA'S POSITION ON SAFEGUARDS AND THE NPT. THE ELITE IN BOMBAY ARE MORE SKEPTICAL THAT THE VISIT ACCOMPLISHED MUCH ON THIS ISSUE AND ARE WITHHOLDING JUDGMENT UNTIL THEY SEE WHETHER THE 7.6 TONS ARE RELEASED, WHAT HAPPENS TO THE PENDING LICENSE, AND WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO URANIUM SHIPMENTS WHEN THE GRACE PERIOD UNDER THE US LEGALATION EXPIRES. IN NEW DELHI, THE GENERAL VIEW IS THAT THE VISIT HAS DEMONSTRATED THAT INDO-US TIES AND COMMON INTERESTS ARE STRONG ENOUGH SO THAT EVEN IF THERE MUST BE A NUCLEAR DISENGAGEMENT OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS WILL NOT BE SERIOUSLY DAMAGED. IN MADRAS, MOST PEOPLE SEEM TO AGREE THAT THE VISIT SUCCESSFULLY DEFUSED THE ISSUE. THE OPTIMISTIC VIEW ON NUCLEAR RELATIONS IS ALSO REFLECTED IN PRESS REPORTING FROM WASHINGTON. UNTIL JUNE 17 PRESS ARTICLES AND EDITORIALS CREDITED DESAI WITH OBTAINING CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL FOR THE RELEASE OF THE 7.6 TONS BUT GENERALLY WARNED THAT INDIA WAS UNLIKELY

TO RECEIVE FURTHER SHIPMENTS. HOWEVER, SINCE THEN, INDIAN JOURNALISTS BASED IN WASHINGTON HAVE BEEN REPORTING MUCH GREATER LIKELIHOOD OF FURTHER SHIPMENTS AND EVEN THAT PRESIDENT CARTER WILL GO THE WAIVER ROUTE ONCE THE LEGISLATION GOES INTO EFFECT. THIS OPTIMISM WAS APPARENTLY INITIATED BY AMBASSADOR PALKIAVALA'S JUNE 17 PRESS BRIEFING IN WHICH HE SAID THAT THE SHIPMENT OF THE 7.6 TONS IS "CERTAIN", FURTHER SHIPMENT IN THE GRACE PERIOD "LIKELY" AND SHIPMENTS AFTER THE GRACE PERIOD EXPIRES "POSSIBLE. SENATOR SPARKMAN'S LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT STATING THAT THERE COULD BE NO FURTHER SHIPMENTS AFTER SEPTEMBER 1979 HAS ALSO BEEN INTERPRETED BY SOME HERE TO MEAN THAT SHIPMENTS IN THE GRACE PERIOD WILL CONTINUE.

6. THERE IS, OF COURSE, ALSO A NEGATIVE VIEW ON THE PRIME LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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MINISTER'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS ON THE NUCLEAR ISSUE. THE LEFTIST PRESS EXPECTEDLY HAS ATTACKED HIM FOR SELLING OUT TO US PRESSURES BY UNILATERALLY GIVING UP THE OPTION OF NUCLEAR EXPLOSIVE TECHNOLOGY, BUT THIS VIEW IS ALSO HELD BY SOME IN MORE MODERATE QUARTERS. MADRAS REPORTS THAT SOME OBSERVERS THINK THE PM OVERPLAYED HIS HAND BY ANNOUNCING THIS POLICY AND AT A MINIMUM SERIOUSLY DAMAGED INDIAN HOPES FOR SELF SUFFICIENCY WITHOUT RECEIVING ANYTHING FROM THE BIG POWERS IN RETURN. THIS VIEW WAS EXTENSIVELY REPORTED BY G.K. REDDY IN A RECENT ARTICLE (DELHI 9569) IN WHICH HE ALSO SAID THAT CONGRESS (I) AND THE CPI IN THE MONSOON SESSION OF PARLIAMENT WOULD MAKE AN ISSUE OF DESAI'S "UNILATERAL RENUNCIATION OF THE NUCLEAR OPTION" WITHOUT PARLIAMENT'S APPROVALM  
BLOOD

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## Message Attributes

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